

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1145

By Watson

A RESOLUTION to honor The Read House, the longest continually operated hotel in the South, on the occasion of its 150th anniversary.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly take great pleasure in recognizing an establishment that, in addition to being a world-class hotel, is a "hidden vault of treasures" that brings 150 years of American history to life for its patrons; and

WHEREAS, this year, Chattanooga's Read House celebrates 150 years in business as the longest continually operated hotel in the South; and

WHEREAS, founded in 1872 by John and Caroline Read, The Read House possesses a rich and storied history that rivals that of the City of Chattanooga, which was founded only thirty-three years earlier; and

WHEREAS, during its illustrious history, The Read House has hosted such luminaries as Winston Churchill, Elvis Presley, Oprah Winfrey, and several future presidents of the United States; and

WHEREAS, The Read House's Silver Ballroom has marked the passage of time by hosting hundreds of weddings, dances, and special events, while its Green Room has earned worldwide acclaim for its frog legs, peppermint ice cream, and special dinners; and

WHEREAS, The Read House still features menu items from the past 150 years and proudly displays pictures of its founders, in addition to historic telephone booths and paintings and decor from the Roaring Twenties; the hotel even has its own resident ghost in Room 311; and

WHEREAS, The Read House was purchased in 2016 by Jon Weitz and his Avocet Hospitality, and a mere year later, the company launched a \$28 million renovation project to restore the historic hotel to the grandeur of the 1920s, when the hotel was expanded; and

WHEREAS, the hotel's renovation has been an unqualified success, having restored the luster of the entire 241-room hotel in a manner that would have met with the approval of Samuel Read, who assumed the management of The Read House from his parents and then expanded and transformed the facility into one of the region's premier hotels during the early 20th century; and

WHEREAS, the reborn Read House also features a new 10th floor penthouse and an upscale steakhouse named in honor of Peter Bridgeman, a forty-seven-year employee of the hotel known as "Peter Rabbit"; and

WHEREAS, as part of its 150th anniversary celebration, The Read House is hosting four "Dinners through the Decades," each of which will feature the cuisine of a different decade; and

WHEREAS, like former proprietor Samuel Read, The Read House and its General Manager Jim Bambrey are looking forward to a bright future now that the hotel has been restored to its glory as the grand dame of Chattanooga lodging; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor and congratulate the owners, management, employees, and guests of The Read House, the longest continually operated hotel in the South, on the occasion of the hotel's 150th anniversary and wish them all the best as they prepare for another 150 years of quality lodging and excellent customer service.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to

the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.